



Newsline

Published Quarterly by the
Montana Department of Transportation Planning Division
www.mdt.state.mt.us

December 2001

MDT DIRECTOR DAVE GALT TESTIFIES BEFORE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

On November 1, 2001 Transportation Director Dave Galt testified before the U.S. House of Representatives regarding benefits to Montana from the current highway program known as the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, or TEA-21. As a member of the House Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, Montana's Representative Congressman Denny Rehberg participated in the hearing, which also included testimony on the success of TEA-21 from Alaska, New Mexico, and Rhode Island transportation directors. During the hearing Congressman Rehberg praised Galt, saying, "Dave really knows where the proverbial rubber meets the road. I've driven 21,000 miles in Montana since January and I can tell you he's doing a great job leading the effort to improve transportation in Montana."

Galt testified that Montana has more travel outside of urban areas than any state in the nation and that many of these rural highways need to be brought up to modern standards. "TEA-21 has made a huge difference in moving toward this goal," he said. Galt stressed the importance of the TEA-21 "firewall" that distinguishes Highway Trust-fund revenue from the rest of the Federal budget, and the Revenue Aligned Budget Authority (RABA) provision of TEA-21 that guarantees all highway-

generated revenue will be spent on transportation. Galt noted, "We believe that a program paid for by the (highway) users should be no less than the total revenue generated by those fees."

"TEA-21 has been a great act for Montana," Galt testified. He said TEA-21 is "an economic generator" for Montana's economy citing the economic benefit that has resulted from obligating some \$979 million in TEA-21 funds since its enactment in June of 1998. Over 70% of these funds have gone to the construction phase of projects. Galt said, "This equates to direct high-paying jobs on the construction sites, jobs with the suppliers of construction materials, and jobs in our communities as the profits of these investments turn over."

Congressman Rehberg agreed, adding, "TEA-21 has been good both for providing funding to maintain and repair Montana's highways and for Montana's economy. Transportation construction provides thousands of high-paying jobs in Montana."

Galt also provided specific examples of important highway projects within the Northern-Rockies/Great Plains region made possible because of TEA-21's funding levels. Two specific Montana examples included the improvements of U.S. 93 and the flexibility provided by TEA-21, which has allowed MDT to coopera-

tively address transportation-related air quality issues in Montana communities before these areas experience serious violations of air quality standards.



Tea-21 was enacted in June of 1998 and will expire at the end of September in 2003. To prepare for the next reauthorization of the Federal highway and transit programs, the US House and Senate will hold a series of hearings of which the November 1 hearing was the first. TEA-21 contains many provisions including its unprecedented funding levels that are extremely beneficial for Montana. To a great extent this can be attributed to Senator Baucus's leadership on the Environment and Public Works Committee and the hard work of Montana's Congressional delegation, as well as the delegations of Montana's coalition partners including North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming and Idaho.

Over the next two years the NEWSLINE will provide updates and information on the debates leading to the next highway program. We'll keep you posted.



John Craig Gone Fishin’

John Craig has retired after 32 years of dedicated service to Montana Department of Transportation. John began his career for the Department of Highways in 1969 working in the maintenance program.

In the fall of 1979, John became the first manager of the Rail Program with responsibilities for administering the Local Rail Freight Assistance (LRFA) Program.

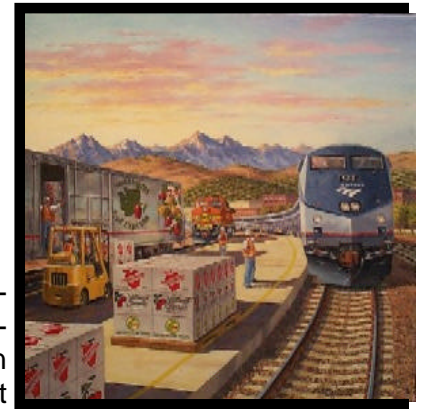
Between 1981 and 1991, John, his staff and rail programs were administered out of the Department of Commerce. In July of 1991, when the Department of Transportation was formed, the rail functions were moved once again. When the federal LRFA Program funds dried up, John assumed the responsibilities for several programs within the Planning Division until his retirement in October.

John now works for the Montana Municipal Insurance Authority.



Smart Air Pilatus PC-12

Amtrak’s Empire Builder Benefits from New Fruit Express Freight Service



ExpressTrak rail car on the new Fruit Express

The future of passenger rail service to Montana’s Hi-Line got an important boost when the inaugural run of the Washington Fruit Express left Wenatchee, WA on September 17 destined for New York City. The first run consisted of apples and pears being transported in refrigerated ExpressTrak railcars attached to Amtrak’s Empire Builder. The apples and pears arrived at their destination September 22.

The service carries Washington fruit and produce to eastern states on the back of existing Amtrak passenger trains. Apples will constitute the highest year-round volume of product carried on the Washington Fruit Express, which can also carry fresh pears and cherries.

Washington’s produce growers face a limited market for their fresh produce as traditional rail freight transportation from the west coast to the eastern markets is ten days – well more than what is allowable in the world of just-in-time produce shipments. This new freight service provides competitive transit times and costs ten to fifteen percent less, giving Washington growers a competitive edge.

The year-round service opens new markets for produce growers, saves fuel and provides a new source of revenue for Amtrak, which is extremely important as Amtrak continues to work towards self-sufficiency.

For more information, please contact Tom Steyaert at (406) 444-7646 or tsteyaert@state.mt.us.

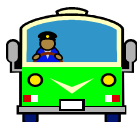
Calgary to Kalispell - Non-Stop!

Beginning in mid-December, Montana residents, businesses and visitors will benefit from a recent decision by a small Canada airline to begin flights between Glacier Park International Airport near Kalispell and Calgary, Alberta. The new turbo-prop service by Smart Air Limited is a small but important step in efforts to improve Montana’s commercial air service.

The twice-daily service, which will take less than an hour compared to the five to six hours it takes to drive the route, will provide Montana residents and businesses with a direct link to international flights that serve Calgary. This will be especially important to businesses in the Flathead Valley that are working to attract international visitors to Montana.

Although the Smart Air Pilatus PC-12 aircraft only seats ten passengers, hopes are high the new service will prove so popular the airline will soon upgrade to a larger aircraft.

For more information on the new service, visit www.smartair.ca



TRANSIT TALES



Montana's TransADE Program Moves Forward

MDT is nearing completion of the draft program guidelines for Montana's first state-funded transit program. This new program, created during the last legislative session through Senate Bill 448, has been named TransADE (Transportation Assistance for the Disabled and Elderly). A TransADE Review Board, made up of representatives of the aging and disabled population, is assisting MDT with the development of the guidelines.

MDT is planning to hold public meetings in the five Transportation Districts to talk about the TransADE Program and receive comments. These meetings, yet to be finalized, are expected to occur between February and March of 2002. Notification of the meetings, including dates, times and locations will appear in the major newspapers.

The TransADE Program will provide operating grants through an annual application process to eligible recipients who provide transportation to the elderly and persons with disabilities. Grants will be funded on a 50/50 ratio with coordination playing a major role in funding determinations. Revenue for this program is being generated from an annual fee of 25 cents collected from each vehicle registration. It is anticipated that the total amount of money available the first year will be approximately \$250,000.

For further information, contact David Jacobs at (406) 444-6120 or djacobs@state.mt.us or Janis Winston at (406) 444-4210 or jwinston@state.mt.us.

Deadlines Approach for Transit Programs

The Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) grant programs, administered by the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), are in full swing for Fiscal Year 2003. Brief descriptions and timelines for two of the programs are listed below:

Capital Assistance Program (Section 5310)

The Capital Assistance Program is available to any eligible recipient who provides transportation services to the elderly and persons with disabilities. Pre-applications have been received from 56 prospective applicants. Workshops were conducted in October to distribute applications and provide instruction on preparing the applications. Capital assistance applications for FY 2003 are due to MDT's Transit Section no later than Friday, **February 1, 2002**. Applicants should receive funding results by the end of April, 2002. If you have any questions or need additional information, contact Patrick Sanders at (406) 444-4265 or psanders@state.mt.us.

Operating Assistance for the Rural General Public (Section 5311)

This grant program is available to eligible recipients who provide transportation services to the rural general public. Anyone interested in obtaining more information can contact David Jacobs at (406) 444-6120 or djacobs@state.mt.us. Grant applications for FY 2003 are due to MDT's Transit Section no later than Friday, **February 2, 2002**. Funding decisions will be announced by April 30, 2002.

TDM Handbook Under Development

Leigh, Scott and Cleary, Inc. (LSC) of Colorado Springs, Colorado is developing a Transportation Development and Management (TDM) Handbook for the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT).

The handbook is intended to assist local governments and transit agencies in Montana with the development of TDM strategies, such as ridesharing, telecommuting, and pricing incentives in their areas. LSC used information from the Missoula-Ravalli Transportation Management Association (MR TMA) and other transportation management associations across the nation to create a product that will be useful to the wide range of potential providers in Montana. MDT will have the TDM Handbook available by January, 2002.

For more information, please contact Tom Stuber at (406) 444-9216 or tstuber@state.mt.us.



2001 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT SURVEYS

As part of *TranPlan 21*'s ongoing process and MDT's public involvement activities, MDT recently completed the 2001 biennial telephone and stakeholder surveys were recently completed for 2001. These surveys provide MDT with customer and transportation users opinions on the following:

- Perceptions of the current condition of the transportation system
- Views about possible actions that could improve the transportation system in Montana
- Priorities of efforts MDT should pursue in economic development (new for 2001)
- Perceptions of the quality of service provided by MDT

Telephone Survey

The 2001 telephone survey was the fourth public involvement biennial survey since 1994. As in previous years, University System researchers used a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) process and Random Digit Dial (RDD). Over 900 persons were interviewed to determine their opinions about Montana's transportation system,

As in 1999, the 2001 survey showed Montanans want more facilities, equipment, or services for:

- City streets
- Major highways
- Rest areas
- Pedestrian walkways

Respondents were asked what they perceived as problems with the transportation system. Montanans viewed nearly all problems studied as small to medium. The only one viewed as moderately severe was rest area access. These results reinforce the positive overall level of satisfaction with Montana's transportation system.

Respondents were also asked to prioritize 21 actions to improve Montana's transportation system. The highest priority was "keeping the public informed about transportation issues" and, as in previous years, the lowest priority was "attempting to reduce single occupancy vehicle use."

As an introduction to the customer service questions, respondents were asked how much they have seen, read, or heard about MDT, and to what degree they are interested in MDT's activities. 51.6% of respondents said they had seen or heard nothing at all or not much about MDT. In contrast, 3 out of 4 said they are interested. In general, respondents gave MDT B- or C+ grades for customer service.

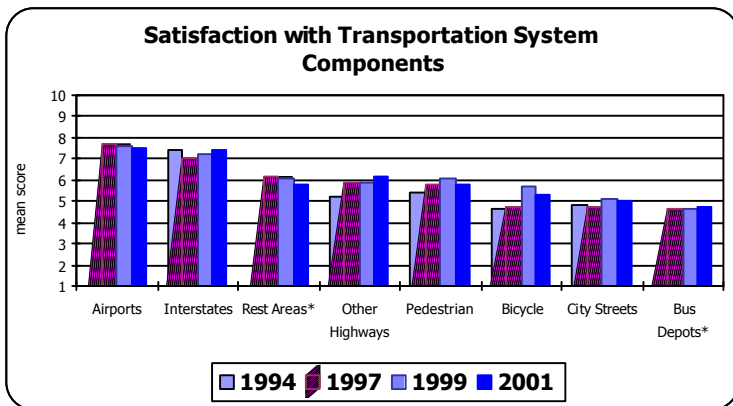
2001 survey results were also compared to previous surveys which were conducted in 1994, 1997, and 1999. The comparison shows that:

- Satisfaction with the physical condition of system components has increased.
- Perceived system problems continue to be rated as small or medium problems
- Possible system improvements remain rated as medium priorities

Stakeholder Survey

The 2001 stakeholder survey was the third since 1997. Over 600 surveys were mailed to eight different stakeholder groups and the Native American Tribes. Of the stakeholders who received a survey package, 202 participated in the survey. This translates to a 33% response rate, which is considered good for this type of survey.

Each stakeholder group and each individual tribe was analyzed separately. Given the varied interest of the groups, one can expect to see differences of opinion about the transportation system. When asked to rate their overall satisfaction with Montana's transportation system, some stakeholder groups were slightly less satisfied than the general public (see chart). Overall, most groups' ratings still fell within an above average satisfaction range except for the bicycle/pedestrian group and environmental groups.



the need for additional facilities and services, and perceived problems and priorities. In addition, this year's survey included new questions regarding economic development and customer service.

The results of the 2001 survey were by and large similar to 1999's results. They showed that Montanans are:

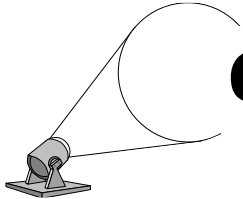
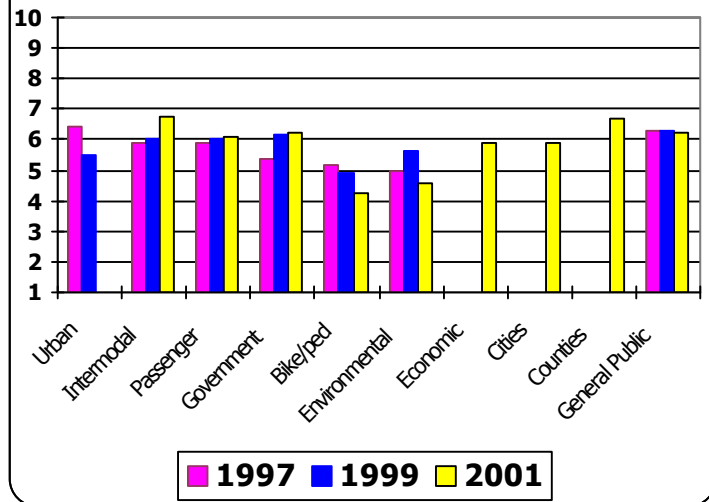
- Generally satisfied with the state's transportation system
- Satisfied with the physical condition of system components (except bus depots)
- Somewhat satisfied with the availability of various transportation services (except passenger rail services)

As with the telephone survey, the stakeholders were asked to prioritize 21 actions to improve the transportation system. "Attempting to reduce single occupancy vehicle use" was the lowest priority and "improving the physical condition of other roads and streets" was the highest priority.

In the new areas of the surveys, the stakeholder groups' top priority for MDT's role in economic development is to "maintain and modernize Montana's existing transportation system based on forecast needs" while "improving commercial air service to Montana" was second. MDT's overall customer service and performance grades are in the C to C+ range with most groups, although the Passenger Service group gave B to B+ grades.

For more information or copies of the final reports, contact Kris Christensen at (406) 444-9240 or krchristensen@state.mt.us.

Stakeholder Satisfaction with Overall Transportation System



CTEP Spotlight- - - - -

Trail Titans

Excerpted from Rails to Trails, Fall 2001
by Christopher Swope

One unwritten rule of American government is that money flows to wherever the most powerful politicians reside. That's why the work of Tom Martin and Mike Davis in Montana's Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP) is so remarkable. Martin, the bureau chief and Davis, the bureau's top planner, oversee the spending of some \$5 million a year in federal funds - money that is largely spent on bike and pedestrian facilities. Martin and Davis make sure that every city, county and tribal government gets its fair slice of the pie, and provide the technical assistance inexperienced officials need to get their own projects started.

Unlike many other transportation enhancements programs which fund according to a competitive process, Martin and Davis distribute Montana's funds based not on politics but population. So even the state's smallest county - with just 500 people - gets close to \$3,000 a year. Communities can 'bank' their funds over time, and CTEP planners help them stretch every dollar. Since the program began in 1991, it has helped fund hundreds of small trail and sidewalk projects and a few large ones, adding 200 miles of bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout the state.

Even if small towns are interested in building a trail, however, most local officials have no trail-building experience. Martin's staff of nine planners and engineers guide communities through the process of designing, contracting and building. The key, according to Martin, is that each of the 111 communities must decide what projects it wants to

do. The injection of both money and their technical aid has sparked many local officials to think of ways to make their communities more walkable and bikeable. "We keep reminding them 'this is your program not ours,'" says Martin. "We want to help them get what they can out of this."

To keep the good project ideas flowing, Martin and Davis put on four seminars a year around the state. This year, more than 120 officials turned out to share experiences about the trail, sidewalk and other CTEP projects in their communities. It is safe to say that most of these projects would not even be in the idea stage, let alone set in pavement, without the unique approach to funding and technical assistance Martin and Davis are taking.

For more information on the CTEP program call Tom Martin at (406) 444-0809 or tmartin@state.mt.us or Mike Davis at (406) 444-4383 or mdavis@state.mt.us.

Welcome

Bill Anderson as MDT's labor compliance specialist. Bill is the contact person dealing with CTEP, Title VI and labor complaints. Bill can be contacted at (406) 444-6334 or bianderson@state.mt.us.



Montana's Partnering continues with.... The Frontier Project

The National Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Program seeks to improve efficiency, safety, and convenience on our nation's highways through the use of advanced technologies. Although rural, two-lane highways account for 80% of the nation's roads and are the site of 61% of all fatal accidents, most ITS projects are deployed in metropolitan areas. In an effort to determine if ITS is feasible in rural environments, MDT and seven other western states are participating in the Frontier Project, a pooled-fund study to place selected ITS projects in rural areas.

MDT is the lead agency for the Frontier Project in partnership with the Western Transportation Institute (WTI) located at Montana State University in Bozeman. WTI manages Frontier and evaluates individual projects. Montana, California, Idaho, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, and Texas have each contributed funds to the pool and submitted projects for consideration. A Technical Advisory Committee made up of members from each participating state picks the most promising projects for funding. To date, Frontier has completed two ITS projects, a High Water Sensor Project in Texas and a Rural Travel Time Estimation Project in Oregon.

The Texas project resulted from concern over flooding on several sections of rural highway. Using Frontier funds, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) installed sensors on each side of Farm-to-Market Road 3259 near the town of Paradise. High water levels trigger sensors which in turn activate solar-powered warning signs located about 1/4 mile from the problem area. The first-level warning is an amber flashing light and a sign that reads "Possible Flooding/Water Over the Road When Flashing." If the flood water reaches a point where it covers the road, the warning changes to a red flashing light and the message changes to "Do Not Enter/High Water." In addition to warning motorists of possible flooding, the system also notifies a central computer station which sends a pager message to maintenance workers. The workers may respond by closing the road using existing manual gates or taking other action to ensure the safety of motorists.



A Texas highway worker shows off one of TxDOT's high water sensors.

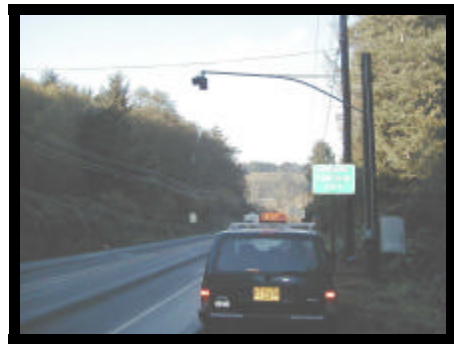
If the project is successful at this test site, TxDOT plans to deploy the system area-wide. By changing sensors, the system could also warn of icing conditions, visibility hazards such as fog, dangerous crosswinds, or unhealthy environmental conditions.

In Oregon, the Rural Travel Time Estimation Project aims to inform motorists and maintenance workers of possible delays or incidents along a busy stretch of the Salmon River Highway (Hwy. 39) and a short section of US 101. This corridor connects a popular casino at one end and the coastal resort town of Lincoln City on the other.

The Salmon River Highway is a mountainous two-lane road traversing the Siuslaw National Forest. It offers few passing opportunities and carries a high percentage of slow-moving trucks, campers, and mobile homes. Congestion, incidents, and delays are common, particularly in the summer. From 1995 to 1997, this section saw 189 accidents. Nine were fatal.

To address the problem, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) used Frontier funds to place a traffic monitoring system at 10-mile intervals along the 34-mile stretch of highway. Cameras on poles are connected to a central computer server. The system is able to recognize license plate numbers, encrypt them to protect privacy, and use the resulting time-stamped codes to calculate average travel times. These times are then compared to normal travel times on uncongested highway. If the difference indicates congestion or delays, the system sends an alert to a dispatch/maintenance station.

After the initial test period, ODOT plans to display travel times on the Internet and also transmit messages to portable variable message signs located at entrances to the corridor so that motorists can better plan their travel and possibly take alternate routes.



Pole mounted cameras record license plate numbers "coming and going" to determine average travel times on a rural Oregon Highway.

Now that Frontier's first two projects are operational, the next step is for WTI to evaluate and document their safety and operational benefits. Each participating state will receive a final report covering the history of the projects, findings and conclusions, as well as an implementation plan for introducing similar projects.

For more information about the Frontier Project, please contact Ross Tervo at (406)444-9248 or rtervo@state.mt.us.



Mike Ferguson flies off into the Wild Blue Yonder!

After 27 years with the Aeronautics Division, Administrator Mike Ferguson retired November 1. Mike was appointed to the Montana Aeronautics Commission in 1971 representing the fixed base operators in the state. He was reappointed in 1973 and served as Secretary to the Commission. In 1974, Mike resigned his position on the Commission to accept the position as Chief of the Air Transportation Bureau with the Montana Aeronautics Division. In 1975, Mike became Administrator of the Division.

Mike accepted the Northwest Mountain Regional Representative position with the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA). In this position he will represent the states of Montana, Idaho, Washington and Oregon in aviation issues and legislation affecting each state. Mike is currently in the process of building a hangar/house at the Townsend Airport and looks for completion next spring.



Montana Aeronautics Administrator Selected

Director Dave Galt recently announced the selection of Debbie Alke as the new Aeronautics Division Administrator.

Debbie began working for the State of Montana in 1985 with the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, she later joined the Department of Justice and in 1990 began her career with the Aeronautics Division. She served as the Administrative Secretary for the Division before being promoted to Administrative Officer.

She has worked closely with the aviation organizations and was instrumental in passing legislation for the 1999 fuel tax increase the Division received. She coordinates the Montana Aviation Conference each year, and staffs the Governor's Essential Air Service Task Force and Montana Aeronautics Board. She received her pilot's license in 1997 and is a member of the Montana Pilots Association, Montana Antique Airplane Association, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), and an officer for the International Northwest Aviation Council. In 1999, Debbie received the Montana Pilots Association President

Award and in 2001 she received a Special Citation from AOPA.

Debbie, a Montana native, was raised in Butte, graduated from Butte Central High School, and attended college in Long Beach, CA. Debbie has two daughters, Danielle is a freshman at Carroll College and Nicole is a junior at Capital High School.

Debbie is respected by the aviation community and will do a fine job as Administrator.

2002 Final STIP Available

The **final** version of the 2002-2004 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is available. The STIP is a list of most major transportation projects planned for the next three Federal fiscal years, including Aeronautics, Rail, Highway, Public Transportation, and Federal Lands Highway projects.

The STIP lists proposed new projects for Montana's transportation network, as well as the Department's best estimate of when transportation projects will begin in the coming years. The information in the STIP is based on assumptions about the amount of funding available and projections on when design work, environmental documentation, right-of-way acquisition, utility relocation, permitting, and all other aspects of project development can be completed. In addition, public comments made in response to the 2002 Draft STIP were considered during the preparation of the Final STIP.

To request a copy of the 2002 Final STIP:

✓ Check with your local library

✓ Visit our Internet site: <http://www.mdt.state.mt.us/planning/stip.html>

✓ Call the Montana Department of Transportation at 1-800-714-7296 or Jeff Ebert at 406-444-7639, jebert@state.mt.us, or Gay Scheibl at 406-444-6374, gscheibl@state.mt.us

✓ Write the Montana Department of Transportation, Transportation Improvement Program, PO Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620-1001.

The TTY number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-335-7592. Alternative accessible formats of the information will be made available upon request.

Inside this issue:

<i>US House Hearing</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Fruit Express Launched</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Transit Tales</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Public Involvement Surveys</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>CTEP-Trail Titans</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>ITS Frontier Project</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>STIP Update</i>	<i>7</i>



Transportation Planning Division Telephone Numbers



Only the most frequently requested numbers are listed here. For an area or person not listed, call **1-800-714-7296** (in Montana only), or **(406) 444-3423**. TTY (406) 444-7696 or 1-800-335-7592.

Administrator (Patricia Saindon)..... 444-3143
Bike/Pedestrian (Carol Strizich) 444-9273
CTEP (Mike Davis) 444-4383
Map Orders (James Colegrove) 444-6119
Multimodal Planning (Dick Turner) 444-7289
Projects (Jeff Ebert) 444-7639
Secondary Roads (Gary Larson)..... 444-6110
Road Data & Mapping (Zia Kazimi) ... 444-6111
Traffic Data (Dan Bisom)..... 444-6122
Transit (Janis Winston)..... 444-4210
Urban Planning (Lynn Zanto) 444-3445
ITS Planning (Ross Tervo) 444-9248
Newsline Editor (Joan Scott) 444-7307

6500 copies of this public document were published at an estimated cost of 49¢ per copy for a total of \$3169.15 which includes \$1162.00 for printing and \$2033.31 for distribution. Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided upon request. TTY number is (406) 444-7696 or 1-800-335-7592.

MDT's Mission

*To serve the public by providing a transportation system
and services that emphasize quality, safety, cost effectiveness,
economic vitality and sensitivity to the environment.*

Montana Department of Transportation Transportation Planning Division

2701 Prospect Avenue
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, Montana 59620-1001
1-800-714-7296

Return Service Requested

Pre Sort Standard
U.S. Postage
PAID
Helena, MT
Permit No. 141